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NARRATOR Flossie Jensen

INTERVIEWER Phyllis Lotz

PLACE Jensen Home, Solvang

DATE April 5, 1988

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Interview with Flossie Jensen

Date of Interview: April 5, 1988, Alamo Pintado Rd. Solvang.

Interviewer: Phyllis Lotz

Transcriber: Phyllis Lotz

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

PL: Introduction

Can you tell me about your grandparents?

Mrs. J: My grandparents....my family goes way back in history to the coming of the Mayflower and we belong to the Mayflower Society because on both my mother's side and my Dads, They were pioneers of that era. We have records of all that. My mother was very active in that society and my sister has all that information. They came to New York City and later moved to Nebraska where my grandfather was a teacher and I remember him as a very gentle person, a wonderful man, his name was George Ashman and he married my grandmother who was Flora Beardsly. Her father was a soldier in the Civil War and he wrote home to my grandmother and his sisters the most wonderful letters. Those letters have now gone to the Bancroft Library at the University of Cal. at Berkeley because they were getting so fragile and the Library has ways to protect them. Those letters had been written by the light of a camp fire with a quill and ink. My grandparents moved to Spearfish, So. Dakota where Grandfather was a justice court judge and a school teacher. My mother went to Spearfish Normal and became a teacher too.

My mother was born in Plattsville, Nebraska. My father who was **otis** Linn, was a Presbyterian minister and a student of the Seminary in Chicago and came out to start the Sunday School and that was now my parents met. He lived in a tent and conducted Sunday School and church in the school house where Mother taught school.

They were married on May 7, 1907, then got on a train for Roseville, California where my Dad had a church. It was a very small church and Dad planted a fig tree that is still there in Roseville. My mother's name was Anne Ashman Linn and she was a beautiful woman. They loved Roseville and three of the children were born there, my brother and two sisters.

Then my Dad moved his family to Modesto where Dad had a church at Crows Landing. He became disenchanted with the ministry and was out of it for awhile but returned to the fold when World War I came along. Even though he had a growing family he enlisted as a Chaplin with the Red Cross. I still have a wonderful letter he wrote about training at Stanford U. and crossing the country with all the young men. He was on a ship when the Armistice was signed, but they went on to Germany and France for 9 months and he wrote my mother every single day.

After Dad came home he was called to the Calvary Presbyterian Church in San Francisco where he was assistant pastor.

I remember how scared I was to have to start Kindergarten

in such a big school. I would wet my pants rather than go to that lavatory.

In 1922 we moved to Reno, Nv. where Dad was employed and I went to Reno school.

In 1924 the church bought 356 acres of land at Lake Tahoe for \$6,000.00. The church still owns it and it is a conference area.

PL: Where were you born?

Mrs. J: In Modesto, Ca. on June 10, 1916. I was the only one born there and the youngest child. My two sisters and my brother are still alive.

In 1926 my Dad moved us to Walnut Creek where he had a church until 1935 and thats where I met my husband Arden Jensen.

Arden was my brother's best friend in ^{high} school. Arden went to Berkeley and my brother attended C.D.P. at Stockton. Arden went four years to college and then on to Bolt Hall to study Law. He worked his way through school at the Federal Land Bank as a clerk. I was always so proud of him because he had worked so hard all through college. We were married during his last year at Law School, in 1938.

We seemed to get along better after that. I had graduated from high school and went to college for a year but stopped to get married. We lived on so little, \$25.00 for rent and \$4.00 a week for groceries. On weekends I had

enough money to cross the Bay to San Francisco for 15 cents, on the ferry, to visit my parents and Mother would send me home with leftovers for the coming week.

PL: How did you two meet?

Mrs. J: At church, his Dad was on the Board of Trustees of our church and my father was very musical and formed a church orchestra, my sisters were in the orchestra and my brother, Artie, his brothers also played in with this orchestra.

Arden was born in Montana and he had two brothers.

In 1938 we arrived in Solvang. A college friend, Leon Libeu sent us word that there was an opening for a lawyer in Solvang. Leon had wrestled with Arden in college, they were both fine wrestlers. Leon was then practicing law in Santa Maria and had heard that Louis Janin was leaving his law practice here in Solvang, and did Artie want to come down?

Louis Janin had been practicing law here for about a year, but his father, Charles Janin, had died and his mother wanted him to come back to Piedmont.

(Louis Janin, the grandfather of this Louis Janin had come to the Santa Ynez Valley in the 1880's and bought land at Alamo Pintado and Hwy. 246 (now) planted grapes and other fruit crops and was here for many years. He was a lawyer in Oakland, Ca. and had as a law clerk, Herbert Hoover at

one time.PML)

We came down, borrowing Arden's brothers car, and decided to buy Louie's practice but Arden took in only \$125.00 in the first six months and we could not pay for it. We rented an apartment from Louie and the office and books, but Louie wiped that all out, and he let us have the law library. I went to work at Nielsens and Rasmussens at 25 cents an hour, in their grocery store. I don't think I was very good, but it was a job. I made so many good friends, Mrs. Skytt, the mother would come in and she had all the items she had purchased added up in her head before I could do it on the adding machine. We weighed out all the rice and flour. I didn't speak Danish and neither did Arden and he was always sorry about that.

PL: Would you tell me about Judge Jensen?

Mrs. J: Arden Jensen was born in Culberson, Montana, March 15, 1912, his folks lived on a homestead, you can't believe all the things they had to do, hauling water and those hard winters. They moved when he was two to Dickensen, No. Dakota where they family started a creamery. That building is still standing. Arden said he was very popular especially in the summer because they made ice cream at the creamery.

Arden's father had been born in Denmark, and his mother in Wisconsin, but her parents came from Denmark. They all spoke Danish in the home, his brothers could but in 1925

they moved to california and there was no need to speak Danish here, and Arden never learned. In 1925 the family sold the creamery for \$150,000.00 and that was a lot of money in those days, they landed in San Diego and didn't like it there so came to the Walnut Creek area. They bought a walnut orchard, and Grandpa Jensen went to work in the Defence Plant nearby. All the boys went to Cal. Berkeley, and interesting all three brothers died within a few years of each other. One in 1981, Arden in 1982 and the other brother in 1984, all of heart attacks. His parents were very proud of Arden and came to visit here many times.

PL: So the reason that you came to Solvang was because of Leon Lebeu and Louis Janin?

Mrs. J: Yes, Leon sent a telegram to us saying, did Arden want the job. He tried so hard a get job, sending out his resumes to all over, this was in 1937 during the Depression. He had been offered a job as an assistant district attorney in Santa Cruz, but when this offer came up we drove on down to see Solvang and fell in love with the area. Louis Janin had a stipen from a prominent family here of \$250 a month and we thought this would continue but it didn't. They didn't know Artie and cut that off. Arden got discouraged and even took a job driving a truck to make ends meet. Finally my father told us to come back to the Bay area, but Arden wanted to stay here. We went back

there 13 times that first year, driving a Model T Ford. Mother would give us leftovers and we survived.

PL: Where was this first law office located?

Mrs. J: On Main Street (I still call it Main Street)/Copenhagen St. Right across the street from the now Fudge Kitchen. About a year after we came, Mr. Robert J. Batty, of Buellton came to Arden and asked if he would be interested in helping organize the Santa Ynez River Water District, and I gave Tom Petersen, manager, all those papers. Arden was to do all the necessary paper work to organize this water district. Of course Arden didn't have anything else to do and he got \$125.00 for his work, and he gave me \$25.00 to spend on myself. So Arden formed the district with Mr. Batty help. He got all the descriptions and riparian rights on paper for George Petersen, Tom Parks, Bill Cooper, Sr., Henning, and Robert Hibbits, and others. There was a lot of effort in forming the district. Mr. Harold Conklin of Los Angeles and Arden went back to Washington D.C. on this Live Stream Agreement. That was so important to keep the water running down river.

PL: Where was your first home in Solvang?

Mrs. J: We had borrowed \$500.00 from a friend to have our eyes fixed before we come here and we were supposed to have an apartment ready for us but it wasn't ready. This was located at Main and Alisal, near where the Mollekroen

Restaurant is now. It is still there as shops. We rented this apartment from Louis Janin. Mr. John Frame, a real estate agent was so good to us, as he helped us with that loan. Walt Hanson had just started his real estate business so he and Mr. Frame were in competition.

PL: What was your impression of Louis Janin?

Mrs. J: Oh, he was....he always bumed cigarettes, (Ha, Ha) he was a nice guy. He was spoiled. He was a good attorney. This apartment was supposed to be ready for us, but it wasn't so Louie told us to go to the Solvang Hotel but that was too expensive, and his wife who was so soft spoken invited us to come to their house and that was for a very short time as they were planning to leave the Valley. Artie finished fixing the apartment, putting in the floor and painting, as it was a new building. Then we couldn't pay Louie rent, so John Frame told us of a house east of Solvang belonging to Mary Osborn Craig. Mrs. Craig was looking for a caretaker for a small house next to her big house. She came up to the Valley only on weekends. The Craig house is where Ed. and Lauri Serge live now, Hwy. 246. We rode our bikes into Solvang to go to work.

PL: What did Solvang look like in 1938?

Mrs. J: It was cute. Main Street was from Dania Hall to Alisal Road, and there were residences all along that road, and

the old feed store. I was 19 when we came and we were welcomed but we were friendly people ourselves. You have to put yourself forward to these Danes.

PL: Was Judge Jensen the only lawyer in town?

Mrs. J: Yes, for a long time he practiced alone, then Elizabeth McCarthy came to town and rented space from Ray Passke, who told Arden he didn't want to rent to her as it was competition for Arden, but Arden told Ray to rent to her that competition was good. Then Ed Norstrand came in. After Arden was appointed to the bench, 8 more lawyers came to town. Ardie did not charge the high fees that today's lawyers do.

Artie would not speculate with other people's money even though they offered him money to buy or build. Arden's mother and father came to California with \$150,000 and they lost everything in land transactions with 2nd and 3rd mortgages.

End of Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

PL: What can you tell me about Mr. Robert Batty?

Mrs. J: As Mr. Conklin used to say, people appreciate water in arid country and Mr. Batty was very interested. I wish I had been more aware of what was going on with the Santa Ynez River Water District as Mr. Batty and Arden was. On that trip to Wash. D.C., I don't know what was said or

what happened but it must have been effective. Mr. Conklin was an engineer from L.A. who was advising these local people on water rights to the river. In 1949 Arden was appointed to the bench as Justice of the Peace. He would have been justice sooner but Mr. Wilhoit protested when Arden was appointed right after we came, in 1939, Mr. Wilhoit said that Arden had not been in residence here long enough, and went to Santa Barbara to protest, with us right behind. So Wilhoit was appointed. There was an article in the newspaper after that saying, "There is no justice in the Santa Ynez Valley," and we were so embarrassed about that! Judge Sam Lyons had been Justice of the Peace for 50 years before that. Wilhoit served for a while and then in 1949 Arden was appointed. Mr. Wilhoit was a minister in the Valley. Old Mr. Ben Bumpuss was the Constable for Arden, and he helped a lot. Arden didn't know anything about the job and when we had the first wedding, Ben Bumpuss brought out the right papers. Arden used my father's wedding ceremony. We had 83 weddings in one year, the most ever.

PL: So you came to stay and lived as caretakers for Mrs. Craig?

Mrs. J: Yes, she would come up and we had to have everything ready as she brought important guests. She was an architect in Santa Barbara. Then we moved to Ballard to a house that had been built in 1887 by the Paine Family, on Lewis St.

We lived there until 1941 and then moved to Mission Drive and then in 1954 came to our present location on Alamo Pintado Rd.

Justice Court was held in Artie's office on Mission Drive but if they needed a jury, they used the Memorial Building that had been built before we arrived in 1938.

PL: Did Judge Jensen ever have trouble trying a case that involved friends?

Mrs. J: I don't think so. I remember one time Andy Petersen and Axel Nielsen got caught poaching in the river and they had to appear. Fred Brown and Axel Nielsen turned the siren on and they were brought to court. No, he had no problem with that. The main activities in this little justice court was traffic violations and fish and game violations.

During the war, 1944, Arden was appointed Deputy District Attorney in Lompoc because he was in practice with Kelly Handenbroke and Laurence Grossman. When Larry went into the service, Arden took Larry place. Arden had tried to get into the service too but did not pass the physical. In 1944 our first child was born, Tom.

There were murders and rapes over in Lompoc and Arden would have to get up in the middle of the night to go into Lompoc. That lasted for a couple of years.

Arden was instrumental in developing the Solvang Municipal Improvement District (SMID) with a bunch of guys.

Burchardi, Arne Sorensen. Before that everything was through the county.

Arden formed the Fire District in Santa Ynez. Helped with the Air port, all those legal papers and went to Sacramento many times. SMID was the only organization of this kind in the state and had special problems to solve. Since Solvang became an incorporated city in 1985, SMID does not apply anymore.

PL: Tell me about your children?

Mrs. J: Tom was born in 1944 and Barbie, in 1946. Tom went to the first Kindergarten that was formed here in Solvang. Some babies were born in a lying-in hospital on Laurel and Alisal but I went to Santa Barbara for Barbie's birth. The doctors in town were Dr. Smith and Dr. Hanze. H.C. Hansen was a butcher who owned the water district. Those pipes have been in the ground for a long time. One Danish Days we had only one toilet to serve all the tourists and I remember them lined up at Richard May's service station at the corner of Alisal and Mission waiting. It was after that that I think they decided to form the SMID. Before that everyone's house was on a septic system.

PL: How did you feel about Solvang incorporating?

Mrs. J: I voted against it. I didn't think we were ready. I guess they are doing a good job and I know it is a hard

job. I don't understand why they are letting so many new buildings go up when we have a water problem. I feel guilty when I turn on my sprinkler system in the garden. I am not particularly crazy about the tourist industry here, especially the out of towners who don't give a hang about their property, and those four wheel bikes bother me.

FL: How did you happen to buy this piece of property?

Mrs/ J: We were friends with Harold and Janice Imbach who owned this land. They paid \$5,000.00 for the land from Kaslow's to the north to Viborg where you turn into the hospital. Mr. Imbach built Dulce Jensen's house and we liked Harold and we wanted to build a house so Harold and I designed the plans for the house. We sold off a couple of lots after a few years. Right now I am trying to get a lot split on this property and am having trouble with the county, everywhere you turn they want money and more paper work. All that red tape, I'm sorry I started it now.

Arden Jensen was Justice of the Peace from 1949 to 1969 when he was appointed to the Superior Court in Santa Barbara by then Gov. Reagan. He was pleased about the appointment and would drive in to S.B. with Judge Westwick who lived on Figuerio Mt. Rd.

In Justice Court, he could have clients but not after he moved to Superior Court.

We were partners with two other men and built the PAR Building on Mission Drive. Erik Petersen bought us out. June Christensen was Arden's secretary when she met Richard Christensen and they were married. Arden was president of the State Judges and Marshals, and Constables. We met some wonderful people at these meetings. He was also on the State Judicial Council for two terms which was a feather in anyone's cap.

PL: Was Judge Jensen feeling poorly before he suddenly died?

Mrs. J: He had a heart attack earlier but he had a check up with Dr. Barranco, and everything seemed fine. He had gone to the store for me and when I went to look for him, I found him in the motor home, slumped over the steering wheel dead. What a great way to go! He was nearly 70 years old. It was a shock to me.

PL: What are you doing these days?

Mrs. J: Active in church, and Friendship House and now I have been appointed to the Human Service Committee for the city of Solvang and am going to those meetings. I am probably going to put my name in to Lutheran Home in the future.

PL: Thank you Mrs. Jensen for this interview today.